

Minutes of a Meeting of the **BEACH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage, on **WEDNESDAY 27th FEBRUARY 2019** at **2.15 p.m.**

In Attendance: Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman
Councillor M Whitwam

Ms R Compton – Ocean Bay Watersports
Mr S Hill – Swanage Boat Hire – Until 2.35 p.m.
Mr R Johnson – Swanage Pier
Mr G King – Swanage Angling Club
Mr P Loudoun – Seaweed Removal
Mr S MacMillan Pratt – Swanage NCI
Mr S Pinkard – RNLI Lifeguards
Mr G Richardson – RNLI Community Safety Officer
Mr K Sheppard – RNLI Lifeguards
Mr J Taylor – Pierhead Watersports

Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk
Miss N Clark – Administration & Communications Manager
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services Manager

There were five members of the public present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Mr K Bragg (Private Beach Hut Owners' Representative), Mr I Brown & Mr Nick Field (Maritime Coastguard Agency), Mr P Connelly (Environment Agency), Mr J Deare (North Beach Representative), Mr T Greasty (Craft Free Zone Representative), Councillor Marsh, Councillor Morris, Mr E Taylor (Wessex Water), Mr D Turnbull (Swanage RNLI Lifeboat Station), Mr C Wiggins (Beach Concession Operators' Representative) and Ms E Wright (National Trust).

2) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 6th June 2018

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Mr G King, and AGREED:
That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 6th June 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

3) Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 6th June 2018

There were no matters raised.

4) Beach Safety Boards - update

It was reported that the new beach safety boards would be installed within the next few weeks, one near the Banjo Pier, and one near the Mowlem Theatre. The boards would

include new content, including RNLI beach safety information, free water bottle refill locations, dog regulations, and a redesigned map. A request was made for details of the location of the new RNLI lifejacket lockers, and boat launch guidelines/regulations, to also be included on the signs.

5) **Swanage Boat Park – update**

An update was given on the fishermen's huts and slipway improvement project, which had previously been hampered due to consistently poor weather and tidal conditions. It was reported that a meeting would be held with the fishermen's huts occupiers on 6th March 2019 to discuss any outstanding issues.

The boat park would be re-lined once the works to the slipway and jetty had been completed, and it was anticipated that invoices for boat park spaces would be issued by the end of March 2019, for payment by 1st May 2019.

6) **Update from the Visitor Services Manager**

The Visitor Services Manager provided updates on a number of matters, including:

Beach Huts

- The 'lottery' approach to beach hut bookings for 2019 had been reviewed, and a new approach had been introduced, on a 'first-come-first-served' basis, or 'hotel room' style booking.
- A new online booking system had been successfully introduced.
- Over 500 beach hut bookings had been taken so far this year, and the huts were already fully booked for the main summer season.
- The first two rows of beach huts at The Spa had been removed. This work was the first stage of an improvement scheme for the area which was currently under development, and would include stabilisation and drainage works.

Blue Flag and Seaside Award application 2019 – it was reported that the Blue Flag and Seaside Award application had been submitted at the end of January 2019, the results of which would be known/published in early May 2019.

Seafront Advisers – the Town Council would be employing four seasonal Seafront Advisers this coming season, one would start in April, two in May, and one in July, all finishing in early September. The Advisers would promote the safe use of the seafront area, and provide advice and guidance on local byelaws and beach regulations to members of the public. The role would also include collecting fees from the boat park, and patrolling the beach, working in partnership with the Council's Enforcement Officers, the RNLI Lifeguards and the Coastguards. The Advisers would wear bright orange shirts so that they would be instantly recognisable.

Large deckchair – a large deckchair, with Swanage 'branding', would be installed in the garden area adjacent to the TIC building. It was anticipated that this would be a popular attraction, and provide a 'photo opportunity' for visitors.

Accessibility Guide – a new guide was being produced providing information regarding access to the beach, photographs, and links to videos, and relevant VisitEngland webpages.

Swanage Information Centre

- It was reported that the TIC Team had won a bronze award at the South West Tourism Excellence Awards 2018/19.
- Two seasonal Visitor Services Assistants would be recruited this year, from 1st April to 30th September.

Beach Regulations – a draft copy of revised Beach Regulations was provided to Committee Members for information purposes. These would be considered at the Tourism Committee Meeting being held on 13th March 2019.

#2 Minute Beach Clean Boards – it was reported that the TIC staff and the Town Mayor had presented a certificate to an eleven-year-old young lady who had undertaken two minute beach cleans every evening over a four week period, when her family had hired a beach hut.

7) **Updates from representatives/organisations**

Swanage Pier

It was reported that the official re-opening of the Pier would be held on 3rd April 2019. However, there were still some minor works to be completed. It was noted that the 1859 Pier Café & Bistro was doing well, with good feedback having been received from visitors.

Swanage Angling Club

It was reported that a club member from the ladies' team had taken part in the World Shore Angling Championships. A junior club member would be a travelling reserve to the receive an England 'cap'.

Pierhead Watersports

A question was raised regarding the placement of the five-knot marker buoys this season, and a suggestion made that contact should be made with the Christchurch area 'co-operative' for advice.

Ocean Bay Watersports

Thanks were given to Committee Members for their support.

Seaweed Removal

The contractor reported that he was ready for the next influx of seaweed when it arrived. It was noted that last season, for the first time in 25 years, there had been no build up of seaweed for the contractor to deal with.

RNLI Lifeguards

It was reported that the lifeguards' hut would be installed on Main Beach on 29th April 2019. The lifeguard service would commence on Saturday 25th May 2019, and would be in situ until 8th September 2019. A discussion was held regarding the possible re-siting of the lifeguards' hut in the future.

National Coastwatch Institution

It was reported that a new webcam had been installed, providing a 360-degree view from the Mowlem Theatre to Durlston. It was noted that Swanage NCI had been allocated a national licence by OFCOM for the use of VHF Channel 65 which would enable communications between NCI lookouts, seafarers, and the RNLI lifeguards. New, more powerful binoculars were now in use, and evening watches would commence at Easter, until sunset/9.00 p.m. and would enhance safety in the bay.

Swanage Sailing Club

Discussions had been held regarding safety in the bay, and the need for better communication channels between all parties/users. The Club would be liaising with Swanage NCI and the RNLI Lifeguard Team accordingly.

RNLI Community Safety Team

As agreed at the Monthly Council Meeting held on 25th February 2019, it was reported that twelve lifejacket lockers would now be provided by the RNLI to the Town Council, instead of nine. An order for the frame to house the lockers would be placed, and the lockers would be installed adjacent to the Stone Quay in due course.

It was noted that the Community Safety Team was currently analysing the data relating to the callouts/activities of Swanage Lifeboat Station during 2018 which would be completed by the end of March 2019, the details of which would be presented to a future Committee Meeting.

The following updates had been received by email:

Maritime Coastguard Agency

It was reported that the Team had had its second busiest year last year, and was currently analysing the data of incidents to see what prevention work could be done. It was noted that two areas of concern for the Team had been the difficulties experienced by event organisers during unforeseen adverse weather conditions, and calls involving mental health issues.

Craft Free Zone

The contractor had advised that the craft free zone would be installed in May 2019 before the start of the season.

8) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

- a) Ongoing monitoring of the beach and consideration of beach recharge** – it was reported that the Poole and Bournemouth Coastal Monitoring Team would be developing a Beach Management Plan for Swanage.
- b) Sea defences – Lower High Street** – it was reported that a bid had been submitted to the Coastal Communities Fund for potential funding options for a sea defence scheme in this area. It was further reported that a public meeting would be held by the Swanage Area Forum in the Emmanuel Baptist Church on Wednesday 13th March 2019 at 7.00 p.m. to discuss ‘Developing a Coast Defence Plan for Swanage’, all welcome. The Environment Agency would also be in attendance.
- c) Review of signage at the Stone Quay regarding the launching of boats** – a request was made for this matter to be placed on the agenda of a future meeting.

9) Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting, planned for June 2019, would be confirmed after the Annual Council Meeting in May 2019.

The meeting closed at 3.15 p.m.
